

In the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting devices formed in a ~~substrate~~wafer from shining spots present in a periphery of said wafer substrate, said method comprising:

forming a plurality of devices in an inner region of the wafer, the inner region of the wafer being surrounded by a periphery region that extends from the inner region to an edge of the wafer, wherein no devices are formed in the periphery region;

forming a ring of organic material ~~[[atop]]~~ on a top surface of said wafer substrate to separate said periphery region at the top surface of said wafer substrate from ~~a further~~ the inner region at the top surface of said wafer substrate ~~wherein said devices are formed.~~

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein ~~[[said]]~~ forming the ring of organic material ~~[[step]]~~ comprises forming said ring of organic material atop a hard mask layer that is disposed atop said wafer substrate.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein ~~[[said]]~~ forming the ring of organic material ~~[[step]]~~ comprises depositing organic material in a region between said periphery of said wafer substrate and said ~~further~~ inner region of said wafer substrate.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein ~~[[said]]~~ forming the ring of organic material ~~[[step]]~~ comprises depositing organic material atop all of said wafer substrate and then patterning said material to form said ring of organic material.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 ~~wherein said ring of organic material~~ includes at least one of a resist layer and another organic material further comprising forming a resist layer prior to forming the ring of organic material.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said wafer comprises a substrate is silicon wafer.

7. (Currently Amended) A method of forming at least one device in a substrate with a top surface, said method comprising:

depositing a layer of resist atop said substrate, wherein said layer of resist comprises a positive resist;

patterning said layer of resist to form a ring of resist atop said substrate, said ring of resist separating a periphery at the top surface of the said substrate from ~~a further an inner~~ region at the top surface of said substrate, wherein said layer of resist is patterned by exposing said layer of resist except for said ring of resist and then removing an exposed portion of said resist;

after removing the exposed portion of said resist, depositing a further layer of resist atop said substrate and atop said ring of resist;

exposing said further layer of resist to form at least one exposed region atop said substrate and atop said ring of resist; and

patterning developing and etching said further layer of resist to form at least one patterned region within said ~~further~~ inner region of said substrate, wherein the further layer of resist atop said ring of resist is not patterned.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 7 further comprising:

depositing a pad oxide layer atop said substrate, depositing a pad nitride layer atop said pad oxide layer, and depositing a hard mask layer atop said nitride layer;

and ~~wherein said forming step comprises~~ forming said ring of material atop said hard mask layer.

9. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 8 further comprising:

etching said hard mask layer using said patterned further layer of resist and said ring of resist as an etch mask;

and etching at least one trench region in said substrate using said hard mask layer and said ring of resist as an etch mask.

10. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 9 wherein said ring of resist is of sufficient thickness that a region of said hard mask layer that is beneath said ring of resist remains after said trench region is etched.

11. (Original) The method of claim 7 wherein said ring of resist is of sufficient thickness that a region of said further layer of resist that is atop said ring of resist is not patterned during said step of patterning said further layer of resist.

12-13. (Canceled)

14. (Original) The method of claim 7 wherein said substrate is silicon.

15-25. (Canceled)

26. (Currently Amended) A method of forming a semiconductor device, the method comprising:

providing a ~~substrate~~ wafer with a top surface that includes a periphery region on the top surface of the wafer ~~that surrounds a~~ surrounding an inner device region on the top surface of the wafer, ~~wherein a plurality of devices are to be formed in the device region; and~~

forming a ring of material over the ~~substrate~~ top surface of the wafer to separate the periphery region from the device region, wherein the ring of material is ~~deposited~~ formed onto the periphery region without a lithographic step; and

forming a plurality of devices in the device region at the top surface of the wafer.

27. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 26 wherein ~~[[said]]~~ forming the ring of material ~~[[step]]~~ comprises forming said ring of material over a hard mask layer that is disposed over said ~~substrate~~ wafer.

28. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 26 wherein ~~[[said]]~~ forming the ring of material ~~[[step]]~~ comprises depositing material in a region between said periphery region and said inner device region.

29. (Canceled)

30. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26 wherein said ring of material comprises a resist layer.

31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26 wherein said ring of material comprises an organic material.

32. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 26 wherein said ~~substrate is~~ wafer comprises a silicon wafer.

33. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 26 ~~[[and]]~~ further comprising:
depositing a layer of resist over the ~~substrate~~ wafer, including over the ~~periphery device~~
region and ~~[[in]]~~ over the ring of material;
patterning the layer of resist; and
altering the wafer ~~substrate~~ in alignment with the patterned layer of resist.

34. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 7 wherein the ring of resist protects ~~device~~
devices formed in the further region of said substrate from shining spots present in said periphery
of said substrate.

35. (Previously Presented) A method of forming at least one device in a substrate, said
method comprising:

depositing a pad oxide layer atop said substrate;
depositing a pad nitride layer atop said pad oxide layer;
depositing a hard mask layer atop said nitride layer;
depositing a layer of resist atop said hard mask layer;
patterning said layer of resist to form a ring of resist, said ring of resist separating a
periphery of said substrate from a further region of said substrate;
depositing a further layer of resist atop said hard mask layer and atop said ring of resist;
patterning said further layer of resist to form at least one patterned region within said
further region of said substrate, said ring of resist being of sufficient thickness that a region of

said further layer of resist that is atop said ring of resist is not patterned;

etching said hard mask layer using said patterned further layer of resist and said ring of resist as an etch mask;

removing the further layer of resist after etching said hard mask layer; and

after removing the further layer of resist, etching at least one trench region in said substrate using said hard mask layer and said ring of resist as an etch mask, said ring of resist being of sufficient thickness that a region of said hard mask layer that is beneath said ring of resist remains after said trench region is etched.

36. (New) The method of claim 35 wherein said ring of material comprises a resist layer.

37. (New) The method of claim 36 wherein said ring of material comprises an organic material.

38. (New) The method of claim 35 wherein the ring of resist protects devices formed in the further region of said substrate from shining spots present in said periphery of said substrate.